

POWDER PUFF DERBY NEARS END AS STORMS THREATEN

JACKSON, Miss. (UPI)—More than 100 flyers in the Powder Puff Derby landed here Sunday, but for most the stop was a short one as they decided to fly on to their final destination of Tampa, Fla., to avoid threatening thunderstorms.

More than 300 women are participating in the 30th Powder Puff Derby, being run as a commemoration of the first female flying race in 1947. The race, which is a proficiency contest this year instead of a speed race, started Friday in Palm Springs. All planes must be in Tampa by 6 p.m. today.

Bernice Kelly, chairperson of the Jackson stop, an optional one for the flyers, said she could not tell who was winning the race, since scorecards will be totaled in Tampa.

The route of the race takes the flyers to Tucson, El Paso and Mid-

land, Tex., Dallas, Shreveport, La., Jackson, Thomasville, Ga., and then to Tampa.

Severe thunderstorms hit the Jackson area Saturday night and weather reports called for a 20% chance of more storms.

There have been no major mishaps during the race, but one plane was put out of commission when it was hit by a gasoline truck while on the ground in Dallas.

The ninety-nines, a women's flying organization, has sponsored the race since 1947, but had decided to end the transcontinental air competition due to lack of funds and sponsorship. However, it decided to hold the competition one more time this year, the 30th race of its kind.

The derby missed only one year, in 1974, when it was canceled because of the fuel crisis.